



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Kellogg Foundation partners with the Empowerment Congress to National Launch Leadership Program modeled on L.A. Initiative**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, along with the non-profit Community Partners organization, has founded a new, national program to be modeled on Los Angeles' Empowerment Congress, the grassroots organization begun by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas in 1992 to help ordinary citizens engage more deeply with local and state government.

The launch of the Community Engagement Leadership Institute, which kicked off Tuesday and will culminate Saturday at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Empowerment Congress Summit at the University of Southern California, brings together teams comprised of elected leaders, civic and business leaders, from around the country. The teams hail from the following locations: Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Washington and Wisconsin.

The three-day institute is designed to help participants develop strategies to improve their respective community and public policy outcomes by using the practices, techniques, and tools that have been most effectively applied by the Empowerment Congress, the inspiration for the city's neighborhood council movement. While visiting Los Angeles, participants will experience hands-on learning methods and create action plans to begin their own civic engagement processes once they return to their communities. At Saturday's Summit, they will attend workshops on issues including safe sleeping practices for parents of infants, the impact of incarceration on families, and a youth discussion on heritage and community.

The Empowerment Congress is entirely orchestrated by community members who develop strategies to advance policy in their communities and improve the quality of civic and community engagement.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit will feature keynote speaker Al Sharpton, actor and best selling author Hill Harper, and will be moderated by *Which Way LA* host Warren Olney. The program, which is free, begins at 9 a.m. and will be followed by a luncheon.

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